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Duke sewer project stymied by funding shortfall

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SENECA — A funding shortfall has forced Seneca Light and Water to alter the Duke Sewer Line project's final phase, Seneca Utilities Director Bob Faires confirmed Monday.

Last month, Tugaloo Pipeline of Westminster submitted the lowest bid of $1,066,000 for the final phase of the project, which aims to provide a nine-mile sewer connection between Duke Energy in Salem and Seneca's own wastewater treatment site. The lowest bid exceeded the $1 million budget for the Duke-funded endeavor, even more so when pre-construction engineering costs were figured into the equation.

The third phase, stretching from Newry to just beyond the U.S. 123 and S.C. 130 intersection in Seneca, will be shortened.

"We won't be doing the whole project," Faires said. "It's been peeled down a little more, and we'll be able to do some within our own budget."

Seneca Light and Water will have as much as $50,000 of its own funds to throw into the project, though Faires does not anticipate it will come to that.

The total project cost for the final phase now stands at $910,000, as one aspect of the final phase of the project, namely the line extension along 130 just north of old Clemson highway, will be omitted.

"Engineering has already been completed for that portion," Faires said. "So if a developer wants to come in, he can utilize those plans we've already done because we already have it engineered."

"Right now we may spend less than $50,000 of our own money, but I have that money in my budget every year for expansion."

Weather permitting, Faires said the goal is to complete the sewer line project by the end of 2010.

"If the weather continues to be like it has been lately, it will be a big problem," Faires said.

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FILE PHOTO

The Duke Sewer Line project, which will carry waste down to Seneca and a portion of which is shown here being installed near Salem, will be cut short after its final phase came in over budget.